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IN REPLY REFER TO

# United States Department of the Interior

FISH .. Nn WILDLIFE Sr- VICr  
BLOOMINGTON FIELD OFFICE (ES)

620 South Walker Street  
Bloomington, Indiana 47403-2121  
(312) 334-4261 FAX 334-4273

January 22, 1996

Commander, U 3. Army Test and Evaluation Command AM:  
AMSTE-EQ (Mr. Paul Cloud) Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland  
21005-5055

Dear Commander:

This responds to your January 22, 1996 telephone call requesting Federally listed species or critical habitat information within the Cantonment Area of Jefferson Proving Ground (JPG), Indiana.

These comments have been prepared under the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.) and are consistent with the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Mitigation Policy.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is not aware, as of this date, of the presence of any Federally listed species or critical habitat within the Cantonment Area of JPG. The Cantonment Area is defined as that portion of JPG south of the firing line.

the Cantonment Area does harbor a significant population of Henslow's sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowii*) a FWS species of concern (formally known as C2 - Candidate Species). Its breeding population that occurs at the airport area, and throughout the grassland in the Cantonment Area, is one the largest known within this species' entire range. A draft Henslow's sparrow status assessment has recently been completed and it reveals that the species is suffering a large range-wide decline. The JPG population is of significant importance to the species and the FWS recommends that every effort be made to maintain that breeding population.

The remaining and significant; portion of JPG, north of the firing line, is inhabited by the Federally endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*). We have captured Indiana bats on all the major streams of JPG including: Otter Creek, Graham Creek Little Graham Creek, Big Creek, and Middle Fork Creek. We have also identified 6 roost trees, 3 of which are maternity roost trees, at JPG. All 6 roost trees occur along tributaries of the aforementioned major streams.

The FWS submitted comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Disposal and Reuse of the Jefferson Proving Ground on May 15, 1995. Within that letter we advised the Army that Section 7 consultation under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA) has not occurred. In response to that statement the Army noted in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Disposal and Reuse of the Jefferson Proving Ground: "On July 14, 1993 and again in July 1994, the

Bloomington Indiana field office provided letters containing detailed consultation and advice on -peries and habitat protection at the JPG." Those letters and others sent to the A Army represent only the early stages of *informal consultation* under Section 7 of -i3 ESA. As we advised in our comments on the DELIS, if the habitat protection guidelines for the Indiana bat contained within the document "Jefferson Proving Ground Fish and Wildlife Management Plan, September 1994" are implemented, that *would conclude informal consultation* and no further consultation *under* Section 7 of the BSA would be required. However, in the MS those habitat protection guidelines are included only as encumbrances which may be imposed rather than being mandatory. Therefore, Section 7 consultation has not been completed. A variety of options are available to conclude Section ' consultation, including: making the aforementioned habitat protection measures mandatory: developing a Installation-Wide Habitat Management Plan similar to that developed at Fort Ord, California; or any other solution which the FWS and the Army can agree to. Please contact-our office so that *we can continue* the consultation process to ensure that the disposal and reuse of JPG i=. in compliance with *the ESA*.

We look forward to working with the Army in the protection and conservation of *endangered species*. Please contact Scott Pruitt at (812) 334-4261 ext. 217 if you have any questions and when you are ready to resolve this issue.

Sincerely yours,

David C. Hudak